RESOLUTION ON THE GULF CRISIS

THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS, WASHINGTON, D.C.
September, 1990

RESOLVED, that the House of Bishops adopts the following statement on the Gulf Crisis.

The House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church supports the President of the United States in his leadership in response to Iraqi aggression in the Middle East. We condemn that aggression and call for the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

We call the people of the Church to continuing prayers for peace with justice, and to prayers for the peoples of the nations involved in the Gulf crisis, their leaders and armed forces, remembering with special concern all hostages and refugees.

We commend the efforts of those searching for alternatives to war and for the construction of regional structures of security, and we encourage the Government of the United States to work through the United Nations, to seek worldwide collaboration in the development of a more stable international order that would permit the speedy withdrawal of foreign troops from the Gulf area.

We see here an opportunity for our nation to deepen its commitment to international law, and especially our reliance on the Charter of the United Nations as the principal means of resolving disputes among nations.

Amidst the uncertainties of diplomatic and military pressures, we call all people of good will to remember all held hostage and the increasing flood of refugees, and we ask governments of the region, international agencies, the United States Government and communities of faith to respond promptly to their needs. We ask Episcopalians to give generously to the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief for refugee relief.

We point to this crisis as evidence of the need for more effective international limits on arms sales and as continuing evidence of the need for effective limits on the proliferation and continuing accumulation of nuclear and chemical weapons.

We ask that care be taken so necessary food supplies and medicine reach the people of Iraq, Kuwait, and all refugees and hostages.

We stress that the Gulf Crisis is not a controversy between Christianity and Islam.

We encourage the Congress of the United States to develop a comprehensive energy policy to reduce United States' dependence on foreign fuel supplies.

We ask our people and the Government of the United States to increase their attention to the peace process involving Palestinians and Israelis, in recognition that no peace is possible in the Middle East without security for the State of Israel and self-determination in their own homeland for Palestinian people.

Finally, we join the Archbishop of Canterbury in his call for prayer and peacemaking in the Gulf Crisis:

"The Christian has a built-in resistance to the use of force. We are given only one mandate. We are to be peacemakers. But the Bible insists that we live in a world in rebellion against its own best interests, a world which has rejected the order given to it by its Creator. Christianity does not lack realism about the intransigence of conflict. The scriptures speak of our responsibility for seeking justice and the well-being of creation in the world as it exists. The hard fact is that the use of force is caused as much by human virtues -- our sense of justice; our belief in the difference between right and wrong; our readiness for self-sacrifice on behalf of others -- as it is by any of our failures.

"A call for prayer will always be a call for peacemaking, and I issue a call for that spiritual weapon at this time of crisis for so many. No matter how turbulent the world or how painful the choices, it is through the grace of God that we are made instruments of peace in the ambiguities of a world made dangerous by human folly and wickedness.*

*Address by the Most Rev. and Rt. Hon. Robert A. K. Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the House of Lords, September 6, 1990.